

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 11098

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJECT: POST CEASEFIRE II MILITARY SITUATION IN QUANG NGAI

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL DANANG BEING REPEATED

QUOTE

DANANG 0745

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJ: POST CEASEFIRE II MILITARY SITUATION IN QUANG NGAI

THE FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT WAS PROVIDED BY THE QUANG NGAI POLOFF:

1. DESPITE THE GENERAL DECLINE IN THE LEVEL OF COMBAT REGION WIDE,
THERE HAS BEEN ONLY A MODEST DECREASE IN THE LEVEL OF MILITARY
ACTIVITY IN QUANG NGAI SINCE CF II TOOK EFFECT JUNE 15. THUS FAR
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FRIENDLY UNITS APPEAR TO BE ADHERING TO INSTRUCTIONS TO CEASE OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS, THOUGH THE ARVN 2 ND DIVISION CONTINUES TO ACCOUNT FOR A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF FRIENDLY ARTILLERY FIRE IN THE REGION. ENEMY INITIATED INCIDENTS HAVE CONTINUED AT NEARLY THE SAME LEVEL, AVERAGING SIX PER DAY. TOTAL CASUALTIES DURING THE FIRST FOUR DAYS OF CF II WERE, FRIENDLY, 16 KIA AND 53 WIA; ENEMY, 21 KIA AND 2 CAPTURED. PRINCIPAL AREAS OF ACTIVITY CONTINUE TO BE 1) EASTERN BINH SON AND SON TINH DISTRICTS, 2) THE UPPER SONG VE VALLEY, AND 3) SON KIM AND SON TRUNG VILLAGES IN WESTERN SON TINH DISTRICT.

2. PROSPECTS FOR A COMPLETE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES IN QUANG NGAI HINGE IN PART ON COMMUNIST ACQUIESCENCE IN TERRITORIAL GAINS MADE BY THE GVN SINCE JANUARY 27, AND THIS APPEARS UNLIKELY. TWO MONTHS LEADING UP TO CF II SAW A GRADUAL ESCALATION IN THE LEVEL OF FIGHTING AS THE COMMUNISTS STIFFENED THEIR RESISTANCE TO GVN "NIBBLING" OPERATIONS. STRONGEST ENEMY REACTION CAME WHEN GVN MOVED INTO UPPER SONG VE VALLEY, THREATENING LONG- TIME COMMUNIST SANCTUARIES AND IMPORTANT COMMUNICATIONS ROUTES INTO THE LOWLANDS. INTELLIGENCE REPORTS AND THRUST OF ENEMY ACTIVITY DURING THE PAST FOUR DAYS SUGGEST THAT PRG REMAINS COMMITTED TO REGAINING LOWLAND TERRITORY WRESTED FROM ITS CONTROL BY GVN SINCE JANUARY 27.

3. THOUGH THE GVN HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN EXTENDING AND CONSOLIDATING ITS MILITARY CONTROL, THERE REMAIN SEVERAL SIGNIFICANT LOWLAND AREAS WHERE ITS PRESENCE IS TENUOUS OR NON- EXISTENT. ARVN UNITS HAVE NOT YET PENETRATED THE ENEMY BASE AREA IN BINH NAM (V), IN SOUTHEASTERN BINH SON DISTRICT (BS7085) WHICH CONTINUES TO SERVE AS A SANCTUARY FOR TWO VC BATTALIONS OPERATING IN EASTERN BINH SON AND SON TINH. DURING THE PAST MONTH THE ENEMY HAS GRADUALLY INCREASED ITS FORCES IN THE LOWLAND AND PIEDMONT AREAS OF WESTERN SON TINH AND TU NGHIA DISTRICTS AND HAS NOT WITHDRAWN UNDER PRESSURE FROM RECENTLY INITIATED ARVN AND RF OPERATIONS. THERE WERE ALSO NEW INDICATIONS OVER THE WEEKEND THAT ENEMY UNITS HAVE CONTINUED THEIR INFILTRATION OF LOWLAND AREAS IN SOUTHERN DUC PHO. ARVN AND SECTOR MILITARY COMMANDERS IN QUANG NGAI HAVE REPEATEDLY INDICATED THAT THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE POST- CEASEFIRE TERRITORIAL ALIGNMENT IS ONE WHICH LEAVES THE GVN IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE LOWLANDS. GVN IS THUS FACED WITH CHOICE OF REVISING ITS OBJECTIVES OR RESUMING ITS SMALL- SCALE " NIBBLING " OPERATIONS IN TECHNICAL VIOLATION OF THE CEASEFIRE.

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4. THE ONLY AREAS IN WHICH MILITARY SITUATION APPEARS TO HAVE STABILIZED ARE THE AREA AROUND SA NUYEN AND THAT WEST OF QL 1 ALONG THE MO DUC- DUC PHO BORDER. ELSEWHERE THE BASIC MILITARY QUESTIONS REMAIN UNRESOLVED IN THAT NEITHER SIDE APPEARS HAPPY WITH THE PRESENT TERRITORIAL ALIGNMENT. PROSPECT, THEREFORE, IS FOR CONTINUED FIGHTING, THOUGH PROBABLY ON SAME REDUCED AND

REASONABLY TOLERABLE LEVEL THAT HAS CHARACTERIZED THE PAST
THREE MONTHS. THOMSEN UNQUOTE
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